

at dawn, at noon, at night, in shine and rain
and snow; he
travels to the rocky shore of a boisterous and
predatory sea;
he finds fairyland in the magic garden of the
Paradou; he
roams the bleak coal country of the north; he is
"buffeted by
the mistral and scorched by the blazing sun of
Provence; he
gazes on La Beauce, an ocean of waving corn,
and on the
battlefield of Sedan, strewn with the dead and
dying. U,e-
ligion, politics, sociology, art, science, trade,
agriculture,
military affairs, life's characteristics, duties,
functions, errors
and aims, love, marriage, eating, drinking, and
a hundred
other matters are discussed before him.
Beautiful friend-
ships, confiding loves, ardent passions, terrible
jealousies and
rivalries, lofty aspirations, horrid lusts,
generous sacrifices,
deeds of bravery and virtue, cruelty and
vengeance, greed,
craft, and cowardice, — in a word, both the
nobility and the
mire of life in turn confront one, in such wise
that this
Kougon-Macquart series is like a miniature
world.

It has been previously shown that Zola
began to study
and plan the series in the middle of 1868, and
commenced
his first volume in May, 1869. For some seven
or eight
months, during the war of 1870-1871, he had
been obliged
to set Ms work aside, but apart from that break
it had occu-
pied the greater part of his attention during
all the years
that elapsed until "Le Docteur Pascal"
appeared in 1893.

Every year, as a rule, some months were occupied in framing a new volume, then several were given to the actual writing of it. In the first instance it was usually necessary to visit places and people; and in some cases certain branches of the chosen subject had to be studied in books, chiefly of a technical nature, This brings one to the consideration of a legend which has grown up around Zola and much of his